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## **From the Director's Desk**

**--Christine M. Branche, Ph.D., Acting Director, NIOSH  
August eNews 2009**

## **The Challenges of H1N1**

In the May issue of NIOSH eNews, I discussed NIOSH's role in the national mobilization of health agencies, health-care providers, scientists, engineers, and others to meet the then-emerging challenge of the novel H1N1 influenza A virus, more commonly referred to as H1N1 or nH1N1. Since then, much has been done across the public and private sectors to protect those at risk of infection, contain the transmission of the virus, and work with determination toward the development and strategic deployment of a vaccine.

The NIOSH web page on H1N1 reflects the efforts that NIOSH and its partners have contributed and continue to contribute, to address the occupational risks of this disease for workers whose jobs involve the potential for exposure. I hope you will use the page as a resource for information and guidance as appropriate for your own workplace needs. [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb081009\\_h1n1.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb081009_h1n1.html)

I also encourage you to read the latest NIOSH Science Blog, which highlights the work being undertaken by an independent Institute of Medicine committee. At the request of the Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and the Occupational Safety and Health Administration (OSHA), the committee will provide recommendations regarding the necessary personal protective equipment for healthcare workers in their workplaces against the H1N1 virus. The panel will hold a workshop on August 11-13 and is expected to issue

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a report by September 1. The blog is posted at [http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb081009\\_h1n1.html](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/blog/nsb081009_h1n1.html).

NIOSH is pleased to support this work by participating in the workshop, discussing results from completed studies, and describing other ongoing research in areas that bear on the committee's charge. Critical aspects of H1N1 are still not well understood. Notable among these uncertainties are questions relating to the transmissibility of the virus, which have ramifications for occupational risk. We share our stakeholders' interest in closing the gaps, advancing the evidence base of scientific knowledge, and using the results to help craft strong prevention strategies for protecting health-care workers.

H1N1 exemplifies the kind of challenge that increasingly faces the occupational safety and health community. We are called on to address something for which the dimensions of risk are not completely defined. In an ideal world, it would remain an abstract problem while we conducted, evaluated, and applied all the research needed to answer every uncertainty. In the real world, that luxury rarely exists. Instead, effective action in real time is required.

As safety and health professionals, we are tasked to use the best tools at hand to meet the immediate need, determine what else we must learn and do, and proceed accordingly. I am gratified that NIOSH has a long and substantial history of engaging the unknown, and helping to advance the frontiers of science, knowledge, and practice. The lessons we have learned in applying teamwork, diligence, scientific integrity, technical expertise, compassion, and pragmatism serve all of us well in helping to address the immediate challenges of H1N1.

### **Article Proposes a National Nanotechnology Partnership Led by NIOSH**

A national nanotechnology partnership, led by NIOSH, is proposed in an article posted online July 7 by the peer-reviewed *Journal of Nanoparticle Research*. The article proposes that the collaboration of government agencies, manufacturers, users, and others would be a realistic interim step toward advancing worker health and safety protection as complex issues are addressed, such as establishing regulatory standards for nanotechnology. The article was written by John Howard, M.D., distinguished consultant with the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) and former NIOSH director, and Vladimir Murashov, Ph.D., a NIOSH senior scientist. <http://www.springerlink.com/content/44013222kk845k7h/?p=71e4d149efa749eba19fbc2cba32742a&pi=6>.

### **New Reports on Safety of Engineered Nanomaterials**

The international Organization for Economic Cooperation and Development (OECD) released the following three new reports on the safety of engineered nanomaterials. These reports reflect NIOSH leadership in the OECD committees and working groups that developed and sponsored the reports.

*Report of an OECD Workshop on Exposure Assessment and Exposure Mitigation: Manufactured Nanomaterials* <https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/25/43290538.pdf>

*Comparison of Guidance on Selection of Skin Protective Equipment and Respirators for Use in the Workplace: Manufactured Nanomaterials*  
<https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/56/43289781.pdf>

*Emission Assessment for Identification of Sources and Release of Airborne Manufactured Nanomaterials in the Workplace: Compilation of Existing Guidance*  
<https://www.oecd.org/dataoecd/15/60/43289645.pdf>

### **Dr. Greg Wagner Joins MSHA in Deputy Post**

Congratulations to Gregory Wagner, M.D., who formerly served as director of NIOSH's Division of Respiratory Disease Studies and as a NIOSH senior advisor. Dr. Wagner has been appointed by Secretary of Labor Hilda Solis as Deputy Assistant Secretary for Policy at the Department of Labor's Mine Safety and Health Administration. At NIOSH, Dr. Wagner made many distinguished contributions to workplace health, including leadership in research to prevent occupational lung diseases and in the NIOSH WorkLife Initiative.



### **NIOSH Supports National Firefighter Health Week, August 17-21**

NIOSH is again pleased to participate as a partner in the National Volunteer Fire Council annual National Firefighter Health Week, August 17–21. National Firefighter Health Week is an initiative to educate the fire and emergency services community and the public about heart health as well as a variety of other health and wellness issues. This year's theme is "It takes a healthy heart, mind, and body to do what you do—Keep It Strong." Find out more at <http://www.healthy-firefighter.org/>.

**National Firefighter Health Week**  
**AUGUST 17-21**  
Learn more at [www.healthy-firefighter.org](http://www.healthy-firefighter.org)



## **NIOSH Board of Scientific Counselors Will Meet August 26**

NIOSH's Board of Scientific Counselors will meet August 26 in Washington, D.C., to discuss NIOSH implementation of recommendations by the National Academies in several NIOSH research program areas. More information about the meeting is available at <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-17671.htm>. More information about the National Academies' review of NIOSH research programs can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/nas/>.

## **Public Meeting On Respirator Standards Development**

NIOSH will hold a public meeting on September 17 at the Hyatt Regency Pittsburgh International Airport, pertaining to standards for testing and certification of respirators. Topics include respirator standards development projects for supplied-air respirators (SAR), air-fed ensembles/suits, and total inward leakage (TIL) test for half-mask, air-purifying particulate respirators. More information is available at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/npptl/resources/pressrel/letters/ltr-091709.html>.

## **Interventions to Prevent Hearing Loss Caused by Noise at Work**

The July 2009 issue of the *Cochrane Review* includes a review of the scientific evidence on interventions to prevent occupational noise-induced hearing loss. The review, coauthored by NIOSH researcher Thais Morata, looks at different occupational areas and what mechanisms (legislation, proper hearing protector usage, etc.) best work to reduce noise levels in workplaces and/or reduce noise exposure of workers. For the full review go to <http://www.cochrane.org/reviews/en/ab006396.html> or listen to the podcast at [http://www.cochrane.org/podcasts/review\\_summaries/2009issue3/issue3\\_2009\\_noise.html](http://www.cochrane.org/podcasts/review_summaries/2009issue3/issue3_2009_noise.html).

## **Occupation as Socioeconomic Status or Environmental Exposure?**

A new journal article by NIOSH researchers summarizes results of a comprehensive survey of current

practices in the collection and use of occupational data in cardiovascular epidemiology studies in the United States. Findings indicated that more extensive use of occupational data is warranted to advance understanding of the contribution of work-related conditions to cardiovascular disease. Collaborative research opportunities are highlighted as a means to address this need.

[http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19429878?ordinalpos=2&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed\\_ResultsPanel.Pubmed\\_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed\\_RVDocSum](http://www.ncbi.nlm.nih.gov/pubmed/19429878?ordinalpos=2&itool=EntrezSystem2.PEntrez.Pubmed.Pubmed_ResultsPanel.Pubmed_DefaultReportPanel.Pubmed_RVDocSum).

## **NIOSH Announces Actions on Additions to the SEC**

NIOSH announced decisions by HHS to designate classes of employees for Area IV of the Santa Susana Field Laboratory, Ventura County, California, and Standard Oil Development Company in Linden, New Jersey, to be included in the Special Exposure Cohort (SEC) under the Energy Employee Occupational Illness Compensation Program Act (EEOICPA). In order to qualify for compensation for the cancers, claimants in the SEC do not need to prove that their cancers were “as likely as not” caused by occupational exposures. For more information go to <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-15397.htm>, and /or <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-15396.htm>.

## **Coal Mine Dust Exposure Is Predictor of Emphysema, Study Finds**

A new study by NIOSH researchers and a colleague at the University of Calgary finds occupational exposure to coal mine dust is a significant predictor of risk for emphysema in coal miners after other risk factors, such as cigarette smoking, are accounted for. An abstract for the study is available online at <http://ajrccm.atsjournals.org/cgi/content/abstract/180/3/257>.

## **NIOSH Researcher Bob Thewlis, CDC Employee of the Month**

The U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention (CDC) recognized Bob Thewlis of the NIOSH Health Effects Laboratory Division as the CDC employee of the month for July. Mr. Thewlis was recognized for his participation in a three-week project to better understand how influenza is transmitted.





## New Prevention through Design Newsletter Available

The NIOSH Prevention through Design (PtD) Program's most recent issue of PtD in Motion has been posted to the NIOSH PtD topic page. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/PtD/>.

## Global Happenings: Let's Collaborate!

On July 6, NIOSH and its global partners posted the latest issue of *Collaborating Centre Connection*, an electronic newsletter. The newsletter highlights the important work of occupational safety and health in different countries in concert with the World Health Organization (WHO).

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/ccc/cccnewsv1n9.html>.

## NIOSH Looking for Facilities to Provide Site Access for Occupational Safety and Health Research

Are you in the manufacturing or construction industry and concerned about workplace safety and health? NIOSH is looking for partners willing to provide site access for conducting exposure assessment studies for the following agents:

**2,2'-dithiobisbenzanilide (DTBBA)**—a peptizing agent (plasticizer) for natural and synthetic rubber used to manufacture tires and other solid rubber goods. Workers are potentially exposed to DTBBA by the inhalation and dermal routes during the compounding and mixing process. Contact Steve Wurzelbacher (513-841-4322).

**2-methoxy-4-nitroaniline (2M4Na)**—used in dyeing processes in the textile industry, as a

chromogenic agent in printing processes, and in making a chemical which has applications in inks and paints. Most exposure occurs during the production, use, and disposal of products containing 2M4Na, especially dye dusts. Contact Steve Wurzelbacher (513-841-4322).

**Diacetyl** in food production, contact Brian Curwin (513-841-4432).

**Manganese** compounds in welding fumes, contact Kevin Hanley (513-841-4113).

## **NIOSH Seeks Comments on the Following:**

### **Respiratory Diseases Research Program Plan**

NIOSH is requesting comment on a draft Respiratory Diseases Research Program plan for implementing recommendations from a recent evaluation of the program by the National Academies. Deadline for comments is August 14. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/173/>

### **Prevention Through Design Plan for the National Initiative**

NIOSH is requesting comment on the draft *NIOSH Technical Report: Prevention through Design Plan*. Deadline for comments is August 22. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/160/>

### **My Knees Hurt! Study Proposed on Miner Knee-Injury Risk**

NIOSH is proposing to conduct a study to better understand the occupational risks for knee injuries in miners from stressful working postures in “low-seam” mining. Deadline for comments is August 24. <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-14834.htm>

### **Recent Coal Dust Particle Size Surveys and the Implications for Mine Explosions**

NIOSH is requesting comments on a recommendation that a new standard of 80% TIC be required in the intake airways of bituminous coal mines. Deadline for comments is August 31. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/174/>



## Three NIOSH Analytical Methods

Methamphetamine and Illicit Drugs, Precursors, and Adulterants on Wipes by Liquid-Liquid Extraction

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/176/>

Methamphetamine and Illicit Drugs, Precursors, and Adulterants on Wipes by Solid Phase Extraction

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/177/>

Methamphetamine on Wipes by Liquid Chromatography-Mass Spectrometry-SIM

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/review/public/178/>

Deadline for comments is September 30.

## Quality Assurance Requirements for Respirators

NIOSH is requesting comments on a petition to change a regulation that specifies when a warning device on a respirator must give an alarm that the air supply in the oxygen tank is being depleted. This alarm warns wearers so they will have time to exit a toxic or oxygen-deficient area before their air supply runs out.

Deadline for comments is October 9, 2009. <http://edocket.access.gpo.gov/2009/E9-11947.htm>.

## Two New Health Hazard Evaluation (HHE) Reports Now Available

The NIOSH HHE Program evaluated the question of whether a higher-than-expected number of cancers existed among information services employees at a health agency and whether the cancers were associated with occupational exposures to magnetic fields from computer servers and other electronic equipment. Investigators found that the number and types of cancer reported did not appear unusual and were unlikely to be related to magnetic fields. The report recommended measures to address employee concerns, including steps to further reduce exposures to magnetic fields by limiting the amount of time spent in the computer server room and increasing distances between employees and magnetic field sources.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2008-0286-3084.pdf>.



The HHE Program evaluated firefighters' potential exposure to antimony through station uniform pants made of FireWear® fabric. Investigators found that wearing pants made from FireWear® fabric did not pose a health hazard from antimony exposure. Investigators recommended that fire departments continue to issue station

uniforms that comply with the National Fire Protection Association 1975 standard.  
<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/hhe/reports/pdfs/2009-0025-0076-3085.pdf>

## Morbidity and Mortality @Work

### Average rate of nonfatal occupational illnesses in U.S. Private Industry by Major Industry Sectors, 2003–2007

Work-related illness continues to place a heavy burden on workers and their families. This month's chart illustrates the impact of work-related illness by comparing incidence rates across private industry sectors. The numbers show the highest rates of illness occur in manufacturing, utilities, and health care and social assistance. For more details, see the chart at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/enewsv7n4chart.html>.

## News from Our Partners

### Connecticut's *HEARTSafe Workplace* Initiative: An Occupational Health and Chronic Disease Partnership

The Connecticut Department of Public Health recently launched its new *HEARTSafe Workplace* initiative, which represents a collaborative effort of the Department's Occupational Health Unit and the Heart Disease and Stroke Prevention Program. The initiative is designed to assist and encourage employers in creating a working environment where employee education and training, workplace policies, and access to lifesaving equipment all provide a greater opportunity for survival of workers experiencing sudden cardiac events on the job. More information can be found at <http://www.ct.gov/dph/occupationalhealth>.

## R2p corner

### NIOSH Seeks Partners

NIOSH is seeking partners to commercialize a new [Passive Organic Dermal \(POD\) Sampler](#). NIOSH researchers will be presenting their research at the International Symposium on Polycyclic Aromatic Compounds on September 20–24 in Charleston, SC. To learn more about partnering with NIOSH, please contact Kathleen Goedel at [Kgoedel@cdc.gov](mailto:Kgoedel@cdc.gov).



### NIOSH Asks Your Opinion on Our Blog!

When you visit the NIOSH blog this month you may be asked to answer a short survey. We are currently evaluating the NIOSH blog and we hope you will take a couple minutes to answer the questions in order to help us make the blog the most useful for our readers. If you have any questions please contact Virginia Sublet [vsublet@cdc.gov](mailto:vsublet@cdc.gov).

### Communication Products

#### New Web Page Focuses on Protecting Clinicians Working in Prisons

A new NIOSH Web page provides resources for protecting healthcare workers from occupational hazards in the unpredictable work setting of a prison. Correctional health care workers face unique risks of infection from bloodborne pathogens. They may be bitten or stabbed by an inmate, punctured with a used needle, or splashed in the face with blood. View the Web page at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/correctionalhcw/>

#### Less Dust—Better Health! NIOSH Offers Web Resources for Controlling Dust from Power Tools

On July 9, NIOSH posted new Web topic pages with practical recommendations for controlling potential silica dust exposures from operations involving the following four commonly used construction power tools:

jackhammers <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/silica/jackhammer.html>  
cut-off-saws <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/silica/cutOffSaws.html>  
tuckpointing <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/silica/tuckpointing.html>  
concrete grinders <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/topics/silica/grinders.html>

#### What's All This Noise?

NIOSH offers a new software product designed to make record keeping and analysis easier for determining, recording, and controlling noise exposures associated with daily mining work tasks.

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/mining/pubs/pubreference/outputid2712.htm>

## New Fire Fighter Fatality Investigation Reports:

Two career fire fighters die after falling from elevated aerial platform—Texas

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face200906.html>

Volunteer fire fighter dies after ten-foot fall from engine—Ohio

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face200727.html>

A career captain dies and a fire fighter/driver is seriously injured when two fire trucks collide at an intersection—Connecticut

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face200717.html>

Fire fighter suffers sudden cardiac death during rural water supply training—Illinois

<http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/fire/reports/face200901.html>

## More...

To see other new NIOSH communication products, including documents and new and updated topic pages, go to the NIOSH “What’s New” page. <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/whatsnew/>.

## Call for Abstracts

### 2010 Public Health Preparedness Summit

Call for abstracts for posters, sharing sessions, interactive sessions, and workshops. Deadline, August 13.

<http://www.phprep.org/2010/instructions.cfm>

### American Industrial Hygiene Association: American Industrial Hygiene Conference and Exposition 2010

Call for professional development course proposals. Deadline August 15.

<http://www.aiha.org/courseapps/Instructions.htm>

### American College of Occupational and Environmental Medicine: 2010 American Occupational Health Conference

Call for session proposals and scientific abstracts. Deadline, August 16.

<http://aohc2010.abstractcentral.com/>

## Upcoming Conferences

A comprehensive list of upcoming conferences can be found at <http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/exhibits.html>.

## Word of the Month

**Passive Organic Dermal (POD) Sampler**—used to measure dermal exposure, this sampler is flexible and easily attaches to any surface and can also be worn on clothing. The unique multilayered design absorbs and separates organic compounds of various molecular weights and volatility present in solid, liquid, or gas phases.

**[NIOSH eNews on the Web: www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/](http://www.cdc.gov/niosh/enews/)**

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